

May 2, 2023

Chairman Joe Manchin
306 Hart Senate Office Building
Washington, D.C. 20510

Ranking Member John Barrasso
307 Dirksen Senate Office Building
Washington, D.C. 20510

Dear Chairman Manchin and Ranking Member Barrasso:

As former Commissioners and Chairs of the Federal Energy Regulatory Commission (FERC) appointed by both Democratic and Republican Presidents, we believe Congress should update the federal hydropower licensing process. We are pleased representatives of the hydropower industry, the environmental community, and Tribal Nations have put aside their previous differences and come together through the Uncommon Dialogue to propose significant reforms to the provisions addressing hydropower licensing in the Federal Power Act (FPA). We strongly urge you to consider their proposal.

FERC regulates over 1,600 hydropower projects at over 2,500 dams pursuant to FPA Part I. Together, these projects represent approximately 54 gigawatts of hydropower capacity, more than half of all the hydropower in the United States. Hydropower is an essential part of the nation's energy mix that supplies nearly seven percent of U.S. electric generation. It provides the nation with a reliable, low-cost, and domestically sourced supply of renewable power.

There are tens of thousands of megawatts of new hydropower and pumped storage license proposals under consideration at FERC, and nearly 45 percent of existing FERC hydropower licenses are due for relicensing by 2035. An efficient and timely licensing process for new and existing projects will be essential for continuing the clean energy transition. While important steps have been taken over the years to improve the process and while we appreciate FERC's continuing leadership, hard work, and dedication to hydropower, we believe further updates are warranted that only Congress can provide.

The proposals put forward by the Uncommon Dialogue coalition will increase efficiencies and inter-agency coordination, reduce redundancies and duplication of work, promote transparency, and reduce costs, while also promoting tribal self-determination and environmental stewardship through the licensing process. Having led FERC, we are well acquainted with the strengths and weakness of the existing hydropower licensing process and believe these reforms are an important step forward for all interested parties. Congress should promptly consider this proposal.

Sincerely,



Norman Bay
Former Chairman
Federal Energy Regulatory Commission



Neil Chatterjee
Former Chairman
Federal Energy Regulatory Commission



Tony Clark
Former Commissioner
Federal Energy Regulatory Commission



Philip D. Moeller
Former Commissioner
Federal Energy Regulatory Commission